

Agee 'blamed for spies' deaths

by COLIN SMITH

PHILIP AGEE, the CIA defector who turned a diary of his disillusion into the best-seller, 'Inside the Company,' now believes that the reason the British Government wants to deport him is that it blames him for the deaths of two British spies in Poland.

At his home in Cambridge yesterday, he claimed that he had heard that Mr Merlyn Rees, the Home Secretary, had made a 'cryptic remark' to this effect to Mr David Steel, the Liberal leader. Steel asked him why he was deporting me, he said, 'and Rees replied that I was responsible for the deaths of two guys, Polish nationals, working for British Intelligence in Poland in 1975.'

Mr Agee, who has lived in Britain since 1972, was served with his deportation order in November together with Mr Mark Hosenball, a fellow-American who works as a reporter for the London *Evening Standard*, and was previously employed on the radical weekly *Time Out*.

The main problem in preparing their appeals against the orders for an Immigration Appeal Tribunal has been the Home Office's refusal to reveal exactly how they have offended. There have only been some general charges about actions 'prejudicial to the safety of the servants of the Crown.'

Mr Agee's appeal will be heard next Tuesday by a three-man panel presided over by Sir Derek Hilton, who will give Mr Rees its recommendation, though the Secretary is not bound to follow it. The former CIA officer, who served in Latin America from 1960 to 1969, strenuously denies that he has ever done anything to endanger British intelligence operations.

But he claims that the accusation may be the result of a story he says the CIA fed to the *Los Angeles Times* early last year concerning the arrest of Colonel Jérzy Pawłowski, the Polish sabre-fencing champion.

Colonel Pawłowski, who won a gold medal in the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico

City, was sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment in April after being convicted of being a spy for the French. Under interrogation Pawłowski is reported to have divulged the names of 120 people involved in a 'NATO spy network' in Poland. According to the *Los Angeles Times*' story, Agee who was stationed in Mexico City, is supposed to have met Pawłowski there and later betrayed him to the KGB. Two British agents may have been among the people the colonel named.

Mr Agee, a convert to revolutionary socialism who has been quite candid about his desire to 'desabilise' his old employers, has published the names of many CIA officers since he left the Agency in 1970, both in his book and in a magazine called *Counterspy*. Among those he has named was Mr Richard Welch, the CIA Station chief in Athens who was later assassinated. But he insists that he never met Colonel Pawłowski during his visit to Mexico City, much less betrayed him.

Mark Hosenball, 25, whose appeal will be heard on 19 January, is in a similar position. He has written much less about intelligence activities than Agee, whom he knows professionally, and has narrowed down the area where he might have offended to two possibilities.

One was an article published in the pilot edition of an underground magazine called *The Leveller*, where he named a woman alleged to have been involved with the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) as a student informer before she joined them as a full-time operative. (In the same article he also named SIS headquarters as Century House, Southwark, but that's been done before).

The other was a piece he wrote with a British freelance journalist for *Time Out* about an establishment called the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) which is at Cheltenham. In

this article, which was reprinted in the December issue of the National Union of Journalists newspaper *The Journalist*, it was alleged that GCHQ manages a chain of Foreign Office and service-run radio monitoring stations around the world.

Another operation by the technicians at Cheltenham, they claimed, had been to analyse the radio signals the IRA send out to detonate remote-controlled bombs. They then set them off prematurely, by intercepting them on the right frequency.

Mark Hosenball says that almost all the material in this article had been published elsewhere in various places. He and his colleague had simply pulled it altogether.

The address and telephone number of GCHQ in Priors Road, Cheltenham, can be found in the Civil Service Year Book. It is a cluster of cream-painted barracks-like brick huts around a large, three-storey red brick building. Some of the cream-coloured huts have barred windows and the whole area is surrounded by a 12-foot high wire-mesh fence with three strands of barbed wire running along the top.

At the main entrance security men in civilian clothes occupy a square, glass-fronted guard room.

Local people are aware that the place, known to them as 'Oakley Farm,' is engaged in some sort of 'hush hush' government work. A taxi driver, whose daughter worked there, said that she had signed the Official Secrets Act and would tell him nothing about her work.

Last night Mr Rees denied giving Mr Steel the reason for Mr Agee's deportation. Mr Steel was abroad and unavailable.



Philip Agee